

# New Boston Recreation

**Subject:** Commissioners' Meeting  
**Date:** April 1, 2008  
**Location:** White Buildings

**Attendees:**

*Commissioners:* Lee Brown, Ken Hamel, David Hulick

*Staff:* Mike Sindoni, Mary Barone

*Guests:* Marcel Laflamme, Glenn Dodge

\* = *absent*

**Discussion, *Motions* & *Action Items*:**

- **NH Health & Wellness**

Mike, Lee and Marcel have been evaluating the health & wellness center for several months. Lee distributed a summary of their analytic process prior to the meeting. Lee spoke with the finance committee looking for support for a future rec center. Marcel reviewed the health & wellness center financials. Unless membership is boosted, the numbers look challenging. Lee and Marcel visited another center in Henniker to get more information. Marcel's comments: The business fits into the scope of recreation. It must have community support. The business does not appear to be profitable right now. A lot of the expense is covered by the physical therapy operation. If rec takes it over, it will have to underwrite the whole building. The equipment acquisition would involve a buy-out of approximately \$70k. The second big issue is annual rent of \$42k gross. The supervision of the operation would also have to be covered. Profitable operation would involve a 30% increase in membership. Literature suggests we could get 10-15% of the eligible adult population, which would be adequate. Actual membership over the last 3 years has been around 200, and 500 have at one time or another been members. Kim has agreed to stay on for 20 hours per week. At least 40 hours needs to be covered. All staff members have to be competent and capable of selling the service. Marcel thinks the town has to support the concept. Once the business can be justified on its own, then it can be included as part of the plan for a recreation center. Rec wants to find consensus from other town groups. How to sell it to the town? Work with existing committees: selectmen, finance, CIP, school, etc. Market to the community and market to the membership. Rec needs to create a business plan. Marcel has started this, but it is difficult. To increase the membership will take 10-12 new memberships every month, which will require a concerted, long term marketing effort. There are seasonal trends as well. Rec brings a lot of marketing ability with little incremental transactional expense. Someone would be required who would consistently work on the marketing effort. The facility is currently open 65 hours per week. 80% of the members are women. What could be done upstairs? The Apple Barn would most likely not be big enough for all rec activities (also storage). Direction: John Durr, the owner of Henniker Fitness, will take a look at the equipment and membership for us. Lee has not made any commitments to Kim. The center has sent a letter out signaling their intention to close the fitness center down on April 29. There are a number of negotiation points including: membership, equipment and rent. The building cannot be used for kid programs because of fire code issues (sprinkler). Does it make sense to continue discussions? No big renovations required. Use this as an interim step to a stand-alone rec center. Show this as part of rec's on-going support of the town. Marcel has started a business plan.

- **Building activities**

What are the school intentions? How does this affect the White Buildings? Can we revive the earlier plan to create a joint use building (most likely without the gym)? Lee and Mike are going to visit Jim Hilton in Newmarket to learn about revolving accounts. Newmarket is about twice the size of New Boston. How much can rec contribute toward a building? This needs to be determined. The school owns the White Buildings land, but they could enter into a joint venture with rec.

- **Grandstand**

What approach should rec take with the Playground Association? There has been a review of documents. There are 3 options: Continue to collaborate as we have in the past. Trade repair of the grandstand for an agreement to turn property over to rec in the future. Join the association. Glenn wants to preserve the

ball field, which is consistent with the general attitude of the rec commission going back almost 20 years. Rec commission could take title to the land instead of the town. How can the property be protected in perpetuity? Put rec in the position of being the advocate for the ball field. Put controls in place to preserve it. What is behind the demolition permit taken out for the grandstand? Lee will put together a narrative to use in a discussion with the PGA within the next week. Could Dave Nixon write up a preservation proposal?

- Director's update
  - Comedy night: 180 people showed up. Big success. About \$200 profit.
  - Easter events: Okay despite the weather.
  - Spring events: Kids dance this Friday, with another in May and in June. Brochures sent out for future programming. Do we want to do soccer again? A lot of work for no return. 80-100 kids participate. It is popular. What do other camps charge? Can we increase the rate?
  - Summer events: 6 concerts planned for the summer.
- Assistant's update: NH walk week. 1<sup>st</sup> week in June. Community event. Collaborate with foot traffic committee. A meeting is scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff evaluations

Selectmen changed Mike's rating of Mary. There was a meeting with the selectmen in February at which time Mike gave specifics about her performance to justify the rating (on-line registration, for instance). The selectmen did not respond to Mike, but sent a letter to Mary instead. The process takes too long, and does not work well. Mary is on the committee to review the process. How can the commissioner's give the department staff better support? Make sure job descriptions are up to date and clearly show how the jobs have changed. Tie performance to financial results of the department. Have the commissioners add their comments about performance at the time of the review. Update job descriptions soon.
- Future
  - Intern opportunity: Use interns to run a rec survey of towns with similar programming. Review staffing and the roles they play in their departments. How do they run their programs? Do they get impact fees? Do they have other sources of revenue? What functions do our staff perform that are performed by non-rec staff in other towns.
  - Meeting schedule: Target monthly meetings.
  - Ball park site walk: Lee asked Mike Dahlberg what would be involved to add to the ball field complex on Old Coach Road. The forestry committee is not enthusiastic. The gravel operation across from Friendly Beaver will shut down sooner than expected. That property might be available for recreation use. We don't know the condition of that site.

***David Hulick, Secretary***